

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, December 16, 1902

Beinn Bhèigs File under Mrs Bell's name Beinn Bhreagh, Victoria County, Cape Breton N. S. ? Dec 16 th 1902. Dear Alec

I was so disappointed to find by your telegram this morning that you did not have my letter with you. The first thing I did after you went was to look for my letter, and because I could not find it anywhere I supposed that you must have it with you, and I have been imagining you studying its provisions just as you studied the documents in the famous Alpha case

I send the letter to you now. It was found between the leaves of your blotting paper. How it got there I can't imagine

Your telegram in regard to valuation came this afternoon and I gave it to Mr Manager. I don't see what buildings you can mean that would do for barn dept. There aren't any. Mr McInnis says that the stable by the road could resume its travels, you know it came over from Crescent Grove, and come up here piecemeal. There is lumber in it that would go to the making of an outhouse or whatever you want.

If only we could get the Manager to send us a more intelligent account each month I am sure that we should do much better. I have been going on with the problem. It seems to me that it would be very little more trouble to do things by check, and prevent a lot of friction. Take a case that is going on now. In a note from Mr Davidson the other day he gave me the precise number of loads of manure that he had had from the farm this last year. It was 142. He then went on to say that until very lately he had had no manure from the farm this fall as he knew that there wasn't much, because "Mr McInnis had put all the manure on the field above the barn before I could get my cart." About the same time

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Mr McInnis remarked that we couldnt get so much oats next year from the farm because nothing “could be done without manure, and the garden had taken so much” They, the two men werent fighting, mind you, for they said this to me at different times, and the question was not being debated, they both merely said as a parenthesis, that there wasnt much manure, and each evidently thought that the other had had more than his share. Now if instead of Mr Davidson or Mr McInnis only having their own word or impressions to go by they had check to show precisely what had been done with that precious fertilizer, their surely would have been less undercurrent of feeling.. I have got what I think a lovely way of managing this. Let there be a box in each department, a large one in the office, and one almost as large in the farm office, and smaller ones in the other departments. Have them fixed to one place and provided with locks and keys. I think that the manager should keep the key of the farm box. This box has a slit in its top. Now here is the procedure. Head of garden dept writes to Manager that he wants ten loads of manure from the farm, to be collected during the month. The Manager is agreeable, and sends him a sealed envelope containing ten checks made of stiff cardboard. Half of each check is colored green, the other half brown, and on the green part is printed the words Garden Account, and on the brown “ 9 I load Manure.” When the gardener gets this package, he puts it all in his box, and locks it so that nobody but himself can get at those checks. Then when he wants a load he takes one of these checks, and goes or sends to the farm. There the farm hand is shown the check, which he recognizes instantly from its color to be an order to supply the garden with one load manure. Then it is dropped through the slot into the box, and the gardener proceeds to help himself to his fertilizer. And every time he wants a load he sends down in this way, and the check in the farm box is his voucher and the farmers.

Now the stable has its wants too. It wants oats and hay and straw and roots. Well, the Manager has a lot of check all of which are colored blue on one half, and various colors on the other, say yellow for hay, pink for oats purple for straw, cream colored for roots. These checks presented and deposited in the farm box are certificates that the manager has authorized the stable to take the hay or oats or straw or roots, to the quantity printed

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on the check. Now when the month is up the Manager goes to the farm, and unlocks the box, and as the stiff little bits of card-board come tumbling out it is quick and easy work to sort them into little piles, and tell at a glance what the farm has done during the month and the garden and the stable. The record of a months transactions are here, and no one can dispute them, and how little book A - keeping is required. Just find out how many g c ards there are with the left part green, — that is the garden, — Oh the garden has had five loads, 4octs per load, charge the garden as having had \$2.00 worth of fertilizer, credit the farm with \$2.0° worth of fertilizer.” There are five checks blue on the left part yellow on the right, —“charge the stable with five bushels of oats one dollar eac k h , — credit the farm with five dollars worth of oats. There are three checks blue at the left part purple on the other — charge the stable with three tons straw at fifty cent a ton, credit the farm with same amount.” Then collect all the check in the office to be used again and again, and report to the owner that the farm has produced so much fertilizer, the garden used so much ? & c, and we have an intelligent idea way down in Washington what is being done on our place, and the Manager, will know without an u y “prying around” what is being done in the garden dept.

See? Yours with much love Mabel

Sample letter to be sent by Davidson, head of Gardening Department to McInnis Manager of Beinn Bhreagh..

December 29th 1902. Dear Sir,

For the proper working of the grounds committed to my care, I require before April 1st;

5000 loads of manure,

(or 170 loads of manure, and from 5 to 600 loads of artificial fertilizer, bone meal, muriate of potash, ata pound.)

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Garden seeds

Total lbs ¢

Vegetable seeds

Total lbs ¢

...Roods wire fencing as per order Mrs Bell

...Fence poles for same

Tools

With this amount of fertilizer I willcover fruit trees, acres of lawn, raise lbs of vegetables Yc Yc,

Yours truly,

Sample letter to be sent by McInnis Manager to Davidson Head of Gas Garden Department, before Jan. 1st 1903..

Dear S o i r Yours of Dec. 29th received, and will be forwarded to m M r Bell. Unfortunately the farm cannot supply you with the amount of manure you require and which I think (or do not think) reasonable for the work required, and we will have to await Mr Bell's decision thereon.

I will recommend the purchase of the quantity of seeds you mention.

Yours truly McInnis Manager.